separating of voices owes much to the recent work by linguistic anthropologists on language ideologies, metapragmatics, and metadiscourses. The author uses all of these concepts to capture how Hopi constitute tradition in their court. And in this it is possible to see Richland's contribution to the emerging edge of legal discourse analysis, and more broadly to the transformation over time of interactionist analyses of the constitution of social realities.

This is a terrific book. It is accessible to undergraduate and advanced scholar alike. And it can be used to address a wide range of issues in sociolinguistic and anthropological scholarship in both teaching and research.

(Received 29 January 2009)

Language in Society **38** (2009). Printed in the United States of America
doi:10.1017/S0047404509990261

KLAUS P. SCHNEIDER and ANNE BARRON (eds.), *Variational pragmatics: A focus on regional varieties in pluricentric languages*. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2008. Pp. vii, 371. Hb. $158.

Reviewed by GUNNEL TOTTIE
English, University of Zurich
Plattenstrasse 47
CH 8032 Zurich, Switzerland
gtottie@mac.com

The study of cross-cultural pragmatics was advocated in a theoretical paper by Wierzbicka in 1985 and has been practiced empirically since then, most prominently by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) and their followers. However, cross-cultural pragmatics has focused on interlanguage variation, and there has been a gap in research in that language-internal regional differences have rarely been studied. It is this vacuum that *Variational pragmatics* – henceforth VP – seeks to fill. As defined by Schneider & Barron, VP is the empirical study of pragmatic variation across and within the boundaries of a single language, thus both between subnational varieties and between different varieties of "pluricentric" languages like German, English, Spanish, or French.[1]

The present volume is a collection of ten chapters dealing with different topics within the area of VP, by thirteen different scholars, and an excellent introduction by the editors of the volume, Klaus P. Schneider and Anne Barron, who both also contributed chapters. They set up a research agenda and a framework for the practice of VP, distinguishing five (intersecting) levels of analysis:

[1] I thank Stefan Th. Gries and Sebastian Hoffmann for comments on this review. Any remaining mistakes are mine.

1. A *formal level* that concerns the use of linguistic forms, such as discourse markers and hedges, and their functions in discourse
2. An *actional leve*l where the focus is on speech act realizations
3. An *interactional level* focusing on sequential patterns like e. g. adjacency pairs, interactional exchanges or phases
4. A *topic level* dealing with choice of conversational content
5. An *organizational level* devoted to turn-taking phenomena (e.g. pauses, overlaps, interruptions, and back-channeling)

Schneider & Barron stress that VP is contrastive by definition and that variety-specific pragmatic features can be established only by empirically comparing two or more varieties. They also provide a useful bibliography of earlier work bearing on VP.

Four chapters in this volume deal with English, one with Dutch, two with German, two with Spanish, and one with French. Most of them are speech act-based and rely heavily on Blum-Kulka et al.'s methodology, studying requests, apologies, invitations (a form of requests), and thanking. Two deal predominantly with form: response tokens and pronouns of address. One chapter focuses on topic but also examines the organization of talk. Six use experimental data, and four use natural data drawn from corpora or recordings of language in use.

For her chapter, "The structure of requests in Irish English and English English," Anne Barron used a discourse completion task (DCT) to collect production data from 27 females aged 16 in a school in southeastern Ireland and from an identical group in southern England. The moves that were used to convey these requests were coded and submitted to statistical analysis. The results of a comparison were complex: The informants from the two nationalities tended to use different types of indirectness and politeness strategies depending on the type of situation, but there was a greater tendency for Irish speakers to use indirectness.

The same two varieties of English are also compared in the contribution by Anne O'Keeffe & Svenja Adolphs, "Response tokens in British and Irish discourse." (In this book, the labels "English English" and "British English" are used interchangeably by different authors to denote the same variety.) The authors draw on two parallel corpora of casual conversations and present both a quantitative and a qualitative study. For the quantitative study, response tokens, defined as items that fill a response slot but do not take over the speaker turn, were studied. The sample was limited to lexicalized items such as *really, right, absolutely, no way, oh my God,* but excluded vocalizations such as *mm, umhum* (this seems an unfortunate move, as it is quite likely that national varieties of English use lexicalized and non-lexicalized response tokens in different ways). British English was found to have a larger repertoire of single-word and two-word response tokens than does Irish English, and British speakers more likely to use *yes, quite,* and questions like *is it?* as response tokens.

The qualitative study was based on two matched 20,000-word subsets drawn from young female speakers. In this part of the study, vocalizations were also included. The authors defined four functions of response tokens, listed here in order of frequency from highest to lowest, used more frequently by British speakers but with the same ranking in Irish and British English: (1) tokens of convergence, marking agreement; (2) tokens of engagement, expressing emotions; (3) continuers, maintaining the flow of discourse; and (4) tokens of information receipt. Not only are the results of this study interesting, but its two-pronged approach establishes a useful methodology and a functional framework for further study of response tokens in conversation.

For his chapter "Small talk in England, Ireland and the U.S.A." Klaus P. Schneider used data elicited by a discourse production task (DPT). Thirty informants from each of the three countries – all females with an average age just under 15 – were asked to imagine a typical conversation between strangers at a party and to put it in writing. Schneider demonstrates that the "different choices and conventions are variety-preferential rather than variety-exclusive" (p. 133) – an important observation that applies to a range of phenomena in pragmatics as well as in the grammar of pluricentric languages (cf. e.g. Tottie 2009). Thus, in opening turns, English speakers mostly used bare greetings, Irish speakers preferred a greeting combined with an appreciation of the party, and American informants a greeting with a self-identification and often a request for the interlocutor's name (*Hi. My name's Jill. What's yours?*). This comes as no surprise to anyone who has attended parties on both sides of the Atlantic, but the finding that compliments in opening turns were preferred by British speakers, not Americans, is unexpected. The finding that Americans proved more likely to include explicit closings like *Nice meeting you* is again unsurprising.

Schneider also shows differences between the varieties on the formal, topic, and organizational levels. He is aware of the "specific nature of the data material used" (134) and the possibility of subregional and individual variation, and he also calls for further work using naturally occurring discourse, but he does not mention the possibility of age- and gender-related variation. How, for instance do males of different ages handle compliments? Such questions need to be addressed in future research.

The title of Sabine Jautz's contribution, "Gratitude in British and New Zealand radio programmes," is a misnomer. What Jautz deals with is EXPRESSIONS of gratitude in radio phone-in conversations drawn from the British National Corpus and the Wellington Corpus of Spoken New Zealand English, and her aim is to find out whether these expressions are actually used to express gratitude or for other purposes, such as interrupting participants or terminating conversations. British speakers were found to use more expressions of gratitude, but in a more formal and less partner-oriented way than New Zealanders. Jautz speculates that expressions of gratitude in her material might be – in Watts's (2003) terms – more politic than polite.

The intricate Dutch system of address pronouns is treated in the contribution by Koen Plevoets, Dirk Speelman, & Dirk Geeraerts, "The distribution of T/V pronouns in Netherlandic and Belgian Dutch." It is based on the 10 million-word Spoken Dutch Corpus, which is stratified according to register, region, and the gender, age, education, and occupation of speakers. The object of study is the choice of pronoun for one of three given grammatical functions: non-inverted subject, inverted subject, and object. The analysis is carried out by means of correspondence analysis, which "considers the rows of a table as a datacloud of points in a geometrical space defined by the columns of [a] table" (187) and then derives a lower-dimensional (usually two-dimensional) approximation of the data. The principle is not hard to understand, but the two-dimensional plots that constitute the bulk of the chapter are not easy to read, partly because of the small print. However, the discussion helps. The study points to clear differences between the two varieties of Dutch and relates them to sociolinguistic factors as well as to language change.

Rudolf Muhr devotes more than half of his chapter, "The pragmatics of a pluricentric language: A comparison between Austrian German and German German," to a discussion of the "macropragmatics" of the two varieties. The discussion is based on previous work, mostly by sociologists. He goes on to present the results of DCTs for 16 different situations eliciting requests and apologies, collected in the 1990s from 200 Austrians and 200 Germans, whose age, gender, and socioeconomic status are unfortunately not specified. The results of a comparison point to substantial differences between the pragmatics of the two varieties: Austrians were found to prefer "[indirect speech act realizations], emotional expressions, requests instead of demands and the use of face-saving moves in apologies" (240).

Muriel Warga's short, well-argued, and neatly presented chapter, "Requesting in German as a pluricentric language," is based on a DCT carried out with 19 Austrian and 25 German high school students aged between 15 and 18. Six different situations involving requests with a high degree of imposition but with varying social difference and social distance between speakers were covered. Warga found great similarities between the two groups with regard to the inventory of request strategies and internal and external modifiers, as well as the distribution of these strategies. However, there were differences in the use of modals, and Austrians were found to use more conditional forms than Germans, and also longer and "more creative and less formulaic introductions" to requests (261) than those used by German respondents. As pointed out by Warga (254), differences between Muhr's and her results could be due to different research methodologies.

Carmen García's chapter, "Different realizations of solidarity politeness: Comparing Venezuelan and Argentinean invitations," is based on videotapes of simulated conversations where 20 speakers of each variety of Spanish were instructed to invite a friend to a birthday party. Argentineans were found to use a higher

proportion of solidarity politeness strategies like imperatives and questions than did Venezuelans, and Argentineans also tended use greater directness, whereas Venezuelans preferred to negotiate compliance with their invitations by providing reasons and justifications. García herself cautions that the experiments only looked at select groups of speakers and might not be representative. In my opinion there could also be an age factor or pragmatic change, or both, at work: García's studies were conducted with Venezuelan speakers aged about 32 in 1993, and with Argentineans aged 23 in 2001. The latter thus belonged to a younger generation and might be using the same direct strategies that have been observed among young speakers of Peninsular Spanish, as part of their "youthful interactional game and social identity" (298).

María Elena Placencia used audio recordings for her study "Requests in corner shop transactions in Ecuadorian Andean and Coastal Spanish," from Quito and from Manta on the Pacific Coast. Placencia concludes that Quiteños and Manteños have different norms of interaction, with Quiteños doing more interpersonal work and Manteños less, with a more task-oriented style – but see my reservations below.

For her study "Apologizing in French French and Canadian French" Ursula Schölmberger collected data from 20 French and 20 Quebecois students by means of a DCT. They were asked to produce apologies in four situations, two with low social distance, and two with high social distance. Schölmberger found few differences between apology strategies in the two varieties on the superstrategy level, but some as regards substrategies.

Many of the authors provide excellent discussions of the way results can be influenced by the choice of material and methodology – elicited vs. natural data, completion or production tasks, audio- or videotaping or corpora, showing awareness of the possibilities and pitfalls of the different types, and often calling for more research with different methodologies. The responses to Schneider's DPT task showing British attitudes to self-identification on p. 124 were astonishingly explicit (*Sorry, I don't mean to be rude, but what's your name?*; *What's your name? – Judith. Why?*) and provide a strong vindication of this method. The bottom line must be that research methods must be chosen to fit the research problems (cf. Barron, p. 43).

VP is a field where the focus is on contrastive work and where differences are more often quantitative than qualitative, and statistics therefore plays an important role in the analysis. In this volume, it is handled with different degrees of aptitude by different authors. Although excellent illustrative linguistic examples are given in all of the different chapters, the descriptive statistics are less clear in many of them. Some of the authors present their results in enormous tables with opaquely organized categories and subcategories, as in Muhr's and García's contributions, and sometimes percentages are specified with two decimals, as in Jautz's and Schölmberger's chapters. The latter calculates percentages with two decimals based on only six or seven observations in some of her tables, surely unnecessary.

I also had trouble trying to replicate some of the significance tests in Jautz's and Schölmberger's chapters. For Schölmberger's chapter, only that concerning a higher incidence of the alerter strategy (*Ecoute!)* in Quebecois seemed to work; her surmise that Canadian speakers are more prone to use more indirect strategies than are French speakers must remain speculation. And one cannot help worrying about Placencia's overall conclusions after reading her discussion of the only table in her study (316), where she states that "Quiteño participants use more diminutives [than Manteños]," 37 vs. 8. But the table also shows that she compares 37 out of 92 observations from Quito with 8 out of 15 from Manta, which means that the Manta speakers actually have a higher proportion, over 50%, of diminutives than Quiteños, who have about 41%. Moreover, a chi-square test shows that the probability of the difference (which is the opposite of what Placencia claims) being due to chance is more than 50%. So although the Quito data are interesting per se, we can learn little from the Manta figures, and nothing of all from a comparison. More careful editorial work would have helped here.

Both the editors' introduction and Plevoets et al. point to the need to go beyond the study of the influence of individual factors on linguistic output to an analysis of the interaction of factors, something that has yet to be done in the field of VP. Plevoets et al. suggest methods like multiple correspondence analysis or loglinear analysis; in my opinion, using variable rule analysis would certainly also be useful in future work.

Notwithstanding these criticisms of details of this volume, I am convinced that variational pragmatics has a bright future. Schneider & Barron have carried out a pioneering job in assembling the contributions and in drawing up the agenda for what promises to be a very fruitful – and very useful – field of research. When results from this research become generally known, for example via textbooks, we can hope for fewer pragmatic failures in communication.

References

Blum-Kulka, Shoshana; House, Juliane; & Kasper, Gabriele (1989). Investigating cross-cultural pragmatics: An introductory overview. In Shoshana Blum-Kulka, Juliane House & Gabriele Kasper (eds.), *Cross-cultural pragmatics*, 1–34. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Tottie, Gunnel (2009). How different are British and American English? And how are they different? In Günter Rohdenburg & Julia Schlüter, *One language, two grammars?*, 339–60. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Watts, Richard J. (2003). *Politeness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wierzbicka, Anna (1985). Different cultures, different languages, different speech acts. *Journal of Pragmatics* 9:145–78.

(Received 11 February 2009)